

Invitation to Quote



**Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of UK Research and Innovation
Medical Research Council**

Subject: NC3Rs self assessment tool

Sourcing Reference Number: IT18138



UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.uksbs.co.uk

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Version 3.3

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Contracting Authorities.

Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

Medical Research Council (MRC)

MRC is at the forefront of scientific discovery to improve human health. Their scientists tackle some of the greatest health problems facing humanity in the 21st century, from the rising tide of chronic diseases associated with ageing to the threats posed by rapidly mutating micro-organisms.

<https://mrc.ukri.org/>

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Contracting Authority Name and address	UK Research and Innovation, Medical Research Council, NC3Rs, 215 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BE
3.2	Buyer name	Declan Ward
3.3	Buyer contact details	ICTProcurement@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	The total budget for this project is £40,000.00 excluding VAT. It is expected that the budget for development of the 2 tools will be £30,000.00 excluding VAT It is expected that the budget for the support and service of the tool for 5 years will be £10,000.00 excluding VAT
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available here. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	13/08/2018 Contracts Finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Emptoris messaging system	02/10/2018 11:00
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	04/10/2018 14:00
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	12/10/2018 11:00
3.10	Date/time Bidders should be available if face to face/telephone clarifications are required	WC 12/11/2018
3.11	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	19/11/2018
3.12	Anticipated Award date	19/11/2018
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	26/11/2018
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	23/02/2024

3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days
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Section 4 – Specification

1 Specification Content

1.1 Glossary

Editable version: Whilst answers to the various questions in the self-assessment tools are under discussion, the content inputted into an account will remain in an editable format.

Final version: Once answers to the various questions in the self-assessment tool are finalised, they are submitted as a final version for analysis by the tool. The answers can no longer be amended in the final version and are stored either online or as a downloaded file.

Lead user: Within the two self-assessment tools, each user account will have an individual who has the highest level of administrator rights, this is the lead user. The lead user has the ability to add other users to the account (sub-users).

NC3Rs: National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research.

Sub-users: The lead user identifies and grants sub-users access to the account. The sub-users have limited access to the data and all changes can be tracked by the lead user.

The 3Rs: Replacement of animals with non-animal methods, Reduction of the number of animals used per experiment, Refinement of scientific procedures and animal husbandry to improve animal welfare (www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs).

User account: This contains all the information inputted into the tool (by both the lead user and sub-users) about a single institute or research group as applicable. The lead user holds the log on and password information for the user account.

1.2 Introduction

- **Background to the NC3Rs.** The NC3Rs is an independent, scientific organisation established by the Government in 2004 to accelerate the development and uptake of technologies and approaches which lead to the replacement, reduction and refinement of the use of animals in science (commonly referred to as the 3Rs). It works with scientists in universities and industry, and with research funding bodies and regulatory authorities, both in the UK and overseas. The NC3Rs annual budget is approximately £10 million, with the majority of this spent on funding research and innovation. Further information on the NC3Rs can be found at www.nc3rs.org.uk
- **The need for 3Rs self-assessment tools.** The NC3Rs has recently published its strategy for 2017-2019 (www.nc3rs.org.uk/our-strategy). This includes a commitment to work with research institutions (primarily universities) to embed the 3Rs in the scientific process. Part of this commitment is to develop two complementary 3Rs self-assessment tools that will allow research institutions and individual research groups to collate, track and benchmark over time their 3Rs activities.
- **What form will the tools take?** The tools will be freely available, web-based resources, based around questionnaires. Users will input answers to a series of preformulated questions about their 3Rs culture and activities. The system will score their responses and provide summary feedback and suggestions for improvement. Questions may have different weightings, but there is no complex branching of questions.
- **Who will use the tools?**
 - (i) For research institutions: This tool will most likely be completed by a nominated senior individual for the institution (typically a university).
 - (ii) For research groups: This tool will most likely be completed by the principal investigator (senior scientist) or others within the research group.

1.3 Scope

- The NC3Rs is seeking to appoint a supplier to develop two online self-assessment tools. The supplier will need to suggest dynamic solutions and engage with the NC3Rs

at each stage in order to generate products that meet the requirements laid out in this document.

- Once the tools have been developed, the supplier will need to provide training to NC3Rs staff members to ensure that they can make minor changes to the tools and maintain them on a day-to-day basis.
- During the tool development and training stages, a representative of the supplier must be available to attend meetings this will be dependent on how quickly the project progresses and the suppliers need to seek input from NC3Rs, the meetings will take place at the NC3Rs office in London.
- User testing should be incorporated into the development of the tool.
- In the longer term, the supplier will need to provide ongoing support, including changing the content of the tool itself (as instructed by the NC3Rs), troubleshooting issues reported by the NC3Rs and users, and also ensuring that the technology and software evolves in order to remain contemporary.
- There is also a requirement for hosting of the tools on secure servers.

1.4 Service Conditions and Environmental Factors

- The institution's/research group's data held within the system will be sensitive, not least because it concerns research using animals. Therefore it needs to be held and managed securely – see 1.12 Security.

1.5 Specifying Goods and / or Services

- The tools will enable users to: (1) identify the elements of an active 3Rs culture; (2) self-assess themselves on how well they are embedding the 3Rs into policy and practice; (3) obtain feedback and suggestions for ongoing improvement.
- In so doing, the self-assessment tools will help the NC3Rs to support research institutions to implement a culture that actively promotes the 3Rs.

1.6 Services and Support

- In the first instance, the NC3Rs is looking for a supplier to design and produce the required two bespoke online self-assessment tools. In order to achieve this, the supplier must take the lead and make innovative and dynamic suggestions, whilst working closely with the NC3Rs team to ensure that the tools are fit-for-purpose (for example, regarding content, ensuring that appropriate weighting and subcategories of questions are correctly applied, and that feedback and advice is allocated correctly).
- The supplier must provide in-depth training to the NC3Rs staff to ensure that they are able to alter the questions within the tool and easily make small modifications to the website interface (for example, adding new documents as part of the feedback) without computer programming knowledge (note staff are familiar with using a variety of website content management systems).
- Once the tools have been produced and are functional, it is expected for the NC3Rs to own the tools and all component parts that are essential for functionality.
- Once the tools are available online, the supplier will need to provide an ongoing service for five years as outlined below.
- The supplier needs to maintain and update the software to ensure it remains contemporary. When the system evolves, the questionnaires already stored within the tools using previous versions of the system will need to be supported in newer versions.
- The content of the tools needs to evolve to keep up with the current 3Rs climate and so the supplier needs to respond within a week to requests from the NC3Rs to change the content of the tool itself.

- The supplier needs to respond in a timely manner to minor issues regarding useability of the tool and technical problems. These issues may be raised by both the NC3Rs and users themselves. Ease of use is extremely important and so it is expected that users will receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours of a technical issue being reported, with the tools being restored within eight days. Failure to meet this target will incur financial penalties that will be mutually agreed within the contractual agreements.
- In the case of a major fault that renders the tool(s) unusable, a response must be received within two hours and the tool(s) restored within 12 hours.

1.7 Tool Specifications

- The self-assessment tools will be freely available, web-based resources.
- The tools must work without the need to install extra software.
- Both versions of the tool will be based on a set of questions/statements, where the user decides how well they comply. The question sets have already been developed in consultation with stakeholders from across the scientific community.
- It is envisaged that there will be a public 'landing page'. This needs to contain a link to the data protection privacy notice, guidance for users and FAQs where the responsibilities of each party are explained.
- The 'landing page' will also allow users access to either the research institution or research group 3Rs self-assessment tool via a log-in system to an account. There should be clear navigation, a simple account registration process, and the option to save information either on the system or locally.
- Accounts should rely on a valid email address. The validity of the email address should be instantly verified by the system. It may be a requirement that only professional email addresses (for example addresses ending in .ac.uk and .org.uk) can be used to register; the system must be able to allow for this possibility.
- The user account will be accessed via a username and password held by the lead user. They must be able to add sub-users to the account who are provided with their own username and password that allows them to access the online version ('editable

version') and make tracked changes/comments for the lead user to accept/reject. There should be no limit on the number of sub-users within an account.

- A number of individuals are likely to be involved in collating and inputting information into the 3Rs self-assessment tool/s. It should therefore be possible to update information over time without having to complete the assessment in 'one sitting', with free movement between questions. The tools must allow a working document to be saved and amended over time and, as a minimum, it must be possible to download the working document and entire question set as a PDF for circulation or discussion within the institution or research team. Some questions will need to include guidance (perhaps by hovering over text for example). The option to upload supporting documents should be available.
- Once a final version (i.e. the completed questionnaire) is ready, this must be submitted for analysis by the system and the results either saved permanently to the account profile along with any supporting documents, or downloaded as a file for local storage depending on user preference. Only the lead user will be able to submit the final version for analysis.
- Following analysis, both the institution tool and research group tool will need to provide the users with a summary of the results based on a scoring system, (including a visual summary, for example a 'spider web diagram'). The questions/statements will be weighted by importance and so the analysis and output must take this into account. The tools should also provide bespoke advice and suggestions for improvement.
- The tools will be used by institutions and research groups to monitor 3Rs activity over time and therefore previous submissions/results (and uploaded documents) stored online should be available on the account profile for reference at a future date (until the point of automatic deletion of data as detailed in a retention document – see below). The tools must also allow those users that have saved previous data locally to upload this back into the system for reference. The tools should allow questionnaire results from different submissions over time to be compared alongside each other in an easily interpreted manner. Ideally, it should allow the user to select which categories/questions to include in the comparison.
- All outputs from the tools need to carry a protective marking and a date stamp.

- Data stored online must automatically delete as it reaches an expiry date (as outlined in the retention document). Within a user account, different categories of data will have different expiry dates. These expiry dates must be issued automatically when data is uploaded.
- The tools must contain an audit trail that traces the movement of data, including when it has been downloaded locally.
- The NC3Rs will appoint an expert working group to advise on the development of the 3Rs self-assessment tools, working with the supplier to ensure that the tools are fit-for-purpose.
- User testing should be incorporated during the development of the tools.

1.8 Technology and Systems

- The online tools should be compatible with different internet browsers, including at least the last three versions of: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari and Opera.
- As detailed in the above service specification, the supplier is required to continue improving the software systems to ensure the tools remain compatible with future interfaces.

1.9 Quality Assurance Requirements

- The NC3Rs is seeking to appoint a supplier to develop (and maintain) the 3Rs self-assessment tools. The supplier will need to understand the purpose of the tools, develop web resources which incorporate the functionality described in this document, and design them to make them attractive and user-friendly. These requirements will form part of the Terms of Agreement.
- The supplier must ensure that the tools meet the expectations of, and feedback received from, the user group testing.
- The tools should adhere to the following accessibility guidelines: HTML 4/5, CSS 2/3.0 and WCAG Version 2 (AA).

- For security requirements, see below.

1.11 Management of the Agreement

- A service level agreement will be developed in conjunction with the supplier, based upon the stipulations, constraints and performance criteria outlined in this document.

1.12 Security

- Security is extremely important due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the fact that users must answer honestly in order for the tools to be effective. All aspects of the project, including the system as a whole, any personal data held, and the data within the tools must be secure to ensure that users feel confident about using the tools.
- All employees and any contractors will be screened by the NC3Rs' security consultants in accordance with the HMG's Baseline Personal Security Standard policy.
- In order to meet the required security levels, the supplier must employ the use of up to date Security Policy and Information Management Protocols, including Security Procedures in order to protect the information held about users and the data within the tool.
- The tool should be hosted securely. Should the supplier not be able to provide the appropriate level of hosting security, the tool will be hosted by a secure hosting provider identified by the NC3Rs.
- The hosting provider must be based in the EU with EU servers.
- The tools will need to comply with government requirements relating to security. It is advised that the supplier works to the recommended guidelines of ISO27001 for information security management systems, especially if the supplier does not hold full government accreditation of their information security systems.
- As part of the tender process the supplier will be required to submit a copy of their Security Policy and relevant security procedures which include Personnel, Information and IT Security to the NC3Rs.

The supplier should also show how they will enforce critical controls for effective cyber defence; these recommended guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.cpni.gov.uk/advice/infosec/Critical-controls/>

1.13 Branding and Marketing

- The tools must be branded as NC3Rs resources.
- The tools must follow the [NC3Rs visual identity guidelines](#), including logo usage, positioning and exclusion zones, colour references (pantone, four colour, screen and web), secondary palettes and typefaces etc.

1.14 Documentation

- The user interface must contain online user guides written by the supplier with input from the NC3Rs.
- The supplier must provide the NC3Rs with an electronic user guide to support the training provided to NC3Rs staff (for example for making changes to the questions/feedback).

1.15 Implementation

- A project timeline must be supplied by the supplier as part of the tender process and must include milestones. This timeline will form part of the contractual agreement and will be used to ensure that the project is progressing in a timely manner.
- It is anticipated that the first version of the tools will be ready for user testing within three months of the project commencing.

1.16 Returns to be completed

- It must be possible to monitor the total number of accounts held for each tool.
- Metrics must be recorded in order to determine how many user accounts have final versions repeatedly submitted (indicative that the tool is being used to track 3Rs activities over time) and the frequency of these submissions.

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

The evaluation model below shall be used for this ITQ, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is 'for information only' it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ($5+5+6=16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	SEL3.11	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL3.12	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL3.13	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms Part 1
Commercial	AW4.2	Contract Terms Part 2
Price	AW5.5	E Invoicing
Price	AW5.6	Implementation of E-Invoicing
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
1.16			
1.16 Evaluation Justification Statement			
In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.			
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding	5%

Quality	PROJ1.2	Project Plan and Risk Management	10%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Methodology	20%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Team and Capability to Deliver	10%
Quality	PROJ1.5	Security	20%
Quality	PROJ1.6	Training and ongoing support for amendments	5%
Quality	PROJ1.7	Supporting technical issues	10%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20%.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that the final score returned may be different as there may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40

Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100.

All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50 ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at
<http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

What makes a good bid – some simple do's 😊

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that we will release the answer to the question to all Bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear, concise and ideally generic contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's Ⓜ

DO NOT

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.26 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority. / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.
- 7.37 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 7.40 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks

the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.41 All timescales are set using a 24 hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.42 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)